

A few months ago a consulting client of ours sat in a review meeting we were having with a face like thunder. It was 2.30 in the afternoon and he had attended a sales meeting which we had generated that very morning. Now whilst sales is a messy business I was pretty sure that the morning's meeting had been very well researched and arranged by our team. So, I sat in trepidation waiting to ask him what was wrong. Now I should at this point make it clear that this is a very fair and honest man I'm talking about. Never have we had a falling out that wasn't over in 5 minutes, and he is one of the few consultant 'sales' directors who has realized that they have neither the time, skills or inclination to dilligently cold-call or follow-up the lukewarm/cold leads that they might own.

Eventually it came out - "We were rubbish this morning!". "We didn't work out what they were really asking us for, I didn't read the notes properly before I walked into the room, and we certainly didn't do bespoke slides or google research before the meeting".

Now this client always goes to one of our meetings with two people, one as salesperson the other as subject matter expert. They play off each other well.

When I asked him about their close ratio of 1st meetings to initial work last week for this blog, he said "about 50%".

So, the reality of his black humour was that actually they are normally pretty good at these 1st meetings. Over 4 years they have worked out what gets them to the next stage, and they clearly impress clients normally well enough to do so.

I reminded him that this was one poor meeting out of about 40 that they would have this year, and that at least he knew what a bad meeting was! I don't suspect it will happen again very soon.

But this is not the case with some of our clients. Despite achieving a high turnover, and running a group of highly paid consultants, some people are not comfortable with the sales material they are delivering in meeting 1. They do not recognize when to close, and what to close for. Moreover, they don't always leave having learned how to improve their performance.

I'm not advocating turning all consultants into salespeople, but I do think that if you're not any good then recognize it and GET SOME HELP! It might make you an awful lot more money. Training; better presentations; looking a little smarter (you'd be surprised); being on time... Sales 101.

If you need some help let us know - we're not sales trainers, but we can point you in the right direction. Otherwise you can buy as many great meetings from us as you want, but if you waste those meetings you waste us too.